Design of railway coaches

1279. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that almost all railway coaches have become defective and hard to operate locks inside;

(b) what steps would be taken to make it technically possible to open doors from outside in times of accidents;

(c) whether it also a fact that when fires occur, passengers are trapped inside;

(d) what are the reasons for poor design capability of railway coach factories;

(e) whether outside help would be sought to improve the designs of railway coaches; and

(f) the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The railway coaches have latches on doors which are locked from inside during the run of the trains, so as to provide safety and security to the travelling passengers, and there is no proposal to make it possible to open from outside, the doors of running trains locked from inside of coaches. These latches are regularly attended to and kept in working order, and can be opened to facilitate evacuation of passengers in case of fire or any other event requiring such evacuation. To further facilitate such evacuation, coaches are also fitted with emergency exit windows and additionally with vestibules in case of reserved coaches.

(d) to (f) Indian Railway coaches are well designed, and have been continuously upgraded to improve passenger safety and comfort, by taking note of technological developments and international norms, and by transfer of technology, wherever necessary. Thus, Indian Railways have switched over from wooden body coaches to integral steel shell coaches having anti-telescopic features. The design of steel shell coaches has recently been upgraded to improve crashworthiness of coaches, besides induction of tight lock centre buffer couplers to prevent climbing of coaches on top of each other in the event of collisions. Specifications of most of the furnishing materials used in coaches have also been upgraded with regard to fire retardant properties, to provide adequate time for evacuation of passengers in case of fire.

Merger of Waltair Division with South Central Railway

1280. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh have submitted any proposal to merge the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway with South Central Railway, for technical, administrative reasons and also to save the operational cost;

(b) whether his Ministry is extending most of trains upto Bhubaneswar from originating station Visakhapatnam without doing any justification with the Waltair Division; and

(c) the reasons for not introducing more trains from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad and vice versa route, and a superfast train from Delhi to Visakhapatnam at par with the Tamil Nadu Express, despite the fact that public demand is high for these two routes which are economically viable also alongwith the complete details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.